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ABSTRACT

This measuring instrument was designed for use by school boards, advisory groups, faculty, students, and the general public in evaluating vocational and technical education programs. Desired program characteristics are presented in check list format and may be arranged along a five-point rating scale to ascertain the degree of agreement with specific characteristics. The checklist is divided into three areas, program, economy, and student. (JS)

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CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY

VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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INTRODUCTION

Vocational and technical education is one of the most important and widely discussed educational programs in our society. It will occupy a position of central importance in the development and growth of Career Education. Importance may be expressed in terms of (1) potential benefit, such as, a need for trained individuals to fill occupational roles in society, a method of quieting student unrest, a method of reducing student dropout or preventing dropouts, a device for exploiting more fully the now dormant capabilities of individuals in response to their desires; (2) results, such as, demonstrated effectiveness in contributing occupationally skilled individuals to the labor force, their financial and social contribution to the economy, decreased unemployment of youth, a willingness of business and industry to work cooperatively with vocational programs gained through mutual benefits, the willingness of people to invest in vocational education while turning down bond issues for other educational purposes.

Quality must be assured as quantity of vocational education is increased. Many new individuals and institutions are involved in the decision and operational processes of vocational education. Each must have essential criteria available for guidance.

The listing of characteristics will be an aid in determining who should be served, how programs should be provided and what results should be expected for the financial and human resources involved. Each individual in the decision-making process should understand that vocational education has two distinct functions--service to a technically-oriented society and service to most individuals in society.

This guide makes the following assumptions:

1. Successful vocational programs can be established and maintained only if those responsible for vocational education build a firm and continuing relationship with the students, parents, other programs of education and the business and industrial community.

2. That full use of the potential of the school to provide occupational manpower necessitates organization for cooperative action at every stage of program development and operation.

3. Each sub-program commands resources vital to a successful comprehensive program; each has a "stake" in human resource development.

4. Within a community, each educational program has a responsibility to contribute to a comprehensive educational system to serve a continuous developmental role for all human resources.

5. The characteristics stated in this guide may be used in developing vocational programs at several levels and for varying duration.

6. Program changes made with the help of this guide should be complementary and be coordinated with other educational programs.

Who May Use This Guide?

Schools Boards and Advisory Groups. Individuals and groups making or influencing decisions may not all be administrators in the formal sense, but they will exert influence or administrative force for the purpose of program development or change. With the responsibility for decision inputs being spread, it is essential that common criteria be made available for use.

Faculty. Most satisfactory contributions can be made to the vocational education of student by individual faculty members when criteria are established and clear to all concerned. Characteristics listed in the guide are not intended to be all inclusive. They should be modified as good judgement indicates.

Students and the General Public. Before electing to support or enter into an educational program, standards of excellence and expectations of the benefits for all participants should be clearly described.

This guide has as its focus factors to be considered for the improvement, expansion or establishment of vocational education programs. It is designed for use in evaluating existing programs, for modifying program functions, or for establishing new programs. Desirable characteristics in this guide are in three major categories--Program, Economy, and Student.

How May This Guide be Used?

Characteristics of Quality Programs ---

1. As evaluative items for measuring effectiveness and efficiency of public vocational education programs:

PROGRAM

Administration	Rating Scale
A. Philosophy and Goals:	Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
1. A written philosophy serves as a frame of reference for policy and procedure.	or 5 4 3 2 1

(Such an ordinal rating scale is useful in reviewing existing programs, by departments, by teachers or by schools to assess the status of productivity in relation to established criteria of the school system. With rapidly changing conditions, i.e. employment, student needs, teachers, administrators, etc., the rating scale may indicate whether or not vocational programs are being maintained in proper equilibrium with the needs of students and other educational programs).

2. As a format for writing policy and administrative procedures to establish or improve programs and departments of public vocational education.

PROGRAM

Administration

A. Philosophy and Goals:

(Many school systems do not possess written philosophies and goals with specific functional statements necessary to evaluate direction, emphasis or progress. The items listed in this section may be used as a frame of reference by school boards, advisory committees, administrators, etc., to consider in establishing written policy and guidance for initiating, improving, expanding or eliminating vocational programs).

3. As a basis for information in school catalogues or for public relations regarding public vocational education.

(The characteristics may serve as an outline for developing the vocational education parts of school catalogues and publicity items for informing the students and the public. Important programmatic information will aid the student in selecting curricula and the public in making decisions about their individual and collective support of public education)

OVERVIEW

Overview of the Guide:

The first group of characteristics presented pertain to PROGRAM.

Administration - Administration must be undergirded by authority clearly described and stated. Basic authority should be contained in stated philosophy and goals supported by stated policy, rules and regulations. Goals and policy give direction to specific program plans and activities. Plans and activities to have validity will be supported by evaluative data. Otherwise, little evidence will be available as to status of programs, results obtained, or to related costs or alternative courses of action. Funding should follow planning rather than direct pla ing. Dissemination of information serves many purposes. Information should be available to all interested and responsible individuals or groups regarding what has been accomplished, what can reasonably be expected and what cannot be accomplished through vocational education programs. The scope of vocational education should be sufficiently broad so as to equip all individuals for entry into the world of work in occupations which appropriately contribute to the national economy. Vocational education programs must be coordinated and articulated with other educational activities in a manner which will guarantee each student appropriate options to become or to continue as contributing members of society. Program quality will largely be determined by the teaching and supervisory staff and the instructional media and facilities at their disposal to provide essential learning experiences.

The second group of characteristics pertain to ECONOMY.

No other educational endeavor contributes more directly to the economy than vocational education. Continuous involvement and assessment of the needs of business and industry are essential to provide program adjustments and information regarding employment opportunities. Cooperation with organized labor contributes heavily to the content of vocational instruction and to employment opportunities of students. Special purpose advisory groups, public and private agencies which provide or receive services concerning vocational education are essential to optimum development without wasteful duplication.

The third group of characteristics concerns the STUDENT.

The foremost consideration must be for students. Will they be attracted to these programs? Will career opportunities be available? Are salaries or income likely to be commensurate with the investment of their time? Recruitment, selection procedures and program opportunities must be realistic to assure that students will have the necessary competencies to enter into occupations or to continue other avenues of education.

Continuous evaluation of student performance is essential for improvement, modification or expansion of vocational education.

It is hoped that the list of characteristics indicative of quality vocational programs will be assistance to all who have roles to play in the provision and improvement of vocational education.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

PROGRAM

ADMINISTRATION

A. Philosophy and Goals

1. A written philosophy serves as a frame of reference for policy and procedures.

2. Emphasis is placed on equal educational opportunities for all youth and adults in the community.

3. Academic and vocational education are complementary.

4. Opportunities are provided for students to achieve their fullest potential socially, intellectually and occupationally.

5. Written goals are provided to guide vocational education. Goals are developed by actual participation of all segments of the community, and represents the aspirations of the community.

6. Diplomas are considered of equal value regardless of the curriculum.

B. Policy, Rules and Regulations:

1. Policy and procedures support the school's philosophy and goals.

2. Policy reflects the focus and emphasis on the development of the student to the fullest of his talents and potential including leadership activities in vocational youth organizations.

3. Policy statements describe the vocational programs as part of the total education program.

4. The policy statement shows vocational education to be of equal value in schedule of courses.

5. Policy statements governing vocational education are reflected in the choice of courses.

6. Policy permits ample time for cooperative education activities for vocational students.

7. The vocational director has equal status with other department heads.

8. School policies permit vocational students to participate equally in extra-curricular activities.

C. Planning and Evaluation:

1. A unit exists with qualified and appropriate personnel for program planning and evaluation.

2. Planning and evaluation is conducted on a continuing basis to provide courses relevant to student needs and the changing manpower needs and job opportunities in the community labor market.

3. There is involvement of the State staff, local administrators, teachers and the community in planning and evaluating programs.

4. Vocational programs are planned as an integral part of the school program.

5. Evaluation is made of student progress and placement according to the goals and objectives of the school.

6. Evaluation includes employers' reports on students concerning job productivity, work habits, attitudes and level of performance.

7. There is a continuous evaluation of students' progress in the classroom and on the job.

8. Follow-up of students in occupational placement is a significant, integral element of program evaluation.

9. Records are properly maintained.

10. The planning and evaluation process is recycled to modify and improve vocational education programs.

D. Funding:

1. Vocational education programs' funding reflects student needs and occupational opportunities in the State.

2. Vocational education funding corresponds to stated philosophy and policy as reflected in the local plan.

3. An equitable distribution of funds (i.e., fifty percent of the school budget for instruction) is for vocational education.

E. Information Dissemination:

1. A favorable image of vocational education is created through information dissemination with progress reports provided on a regular basis.

2. Information is made available to students, parents, and business and industrial employers regarding scope and availability of vocational education.

3. Vocational education's contribution to the economy and community growth is stressed.

4. Administrators and teachers participate in community, State and National functions related to vocational education.

5. Open House for the community is provided.

CURRICULUM

A. Scope:

1. In-depth occupational orientation is available to students at all levels--elementary, junior high, secondary, post-secondary and adult.

2. Pre-vocational education courses are widely available.

3. Remedial education programs are provided.

4. Vocational programs are of sufficient number and replicated in accordance with student needs and occupational trends.

5. Courses and instruction are of high quality and directly responsive to actual and potential demands of the community.

6. Vocational education programs are equally available to male and female, advantaged and disadvantaged, and all ethnic groups.

7. The total vocational program is based on individual, community and State needs.

8. Vocational programs serve the needs of adults in the community for retraining and upgrading purposes.

9. The curriculum is relevant, well-planned and effective.

B. Articulation:

1. Coordination of vocational education programs with general education programs is evident.

2. Vocational students may enroll in courses which will provide an option of either continuing their education or becoming employed.

3. Vocational education students may pick and choose among occupational areas without penalty.

4. Individual occupational programs are coordinated to provide articulation among occupational areas and between vocational and academic areas.

5. Cooperative work experiences are available to students in all occupational areas.

6. Upon leaving or graduating, vocational students possess at least entry-level, marketable skills.

C. Facilities:

1. In the comprehensive high school, the vocational education facility is an integral part of the school plant.

2. Facilities are adequate and appropriate to house students and equipment for occupational programs.

3. In appearance and quality, facilities compare favorably to other educational facilities.

D. Instructional Materials and Equipment:

1. Equipment is up to date and appropriate to provide direct transfer of skills from school to business and industry.

2. The equipment is safe, functional and up to date.

3. Instructional materials are appropriate to the curriculum objectives and the ability level of the students.

4. Students are taught to care for and maintain assigned areas and equipment, and to take safety precautions.

5. Reference books, manuals, workbooks, guides, courses of study and audio-visual aids are appropriate and relevant to the program.

E. Supervision and Coordination:

1. Supervisors possess highly developed skills in administration and personal interaction.

2. Supervision is provided by personnel with business or industrial experience appropriate to the vocational education programs.

3. Supervision is adequate to assist teachers and students to progress jointly toward appropriate, relevant goals.

4. Teachers are receptive to supervision and implement recommended modifications to improve programs.

5. A harmonious working relationship exists between State supervisors, teacher educators, and school administrators.

6. State vocational education staff members make regular visits to assist with program improvement.

D. Evaluation:

1. Evaluation is performed and reported regarding process and procedure, content and results of instructional programs.

TEACHERS

A. Qualifications:

1. The teacher is occupationally competent and has a sufficiently broad general education which enables him to communicate with the total staff.

2. The teacher is skilled in the organization of subject matter and the teaching-learning process.

3. The teacher is cognizant of the socio-psychological needs of youth and can relate to the students successfully.

4. The teachers' plans, materials and performance are observed regularly to assure quality of instruction.

B. Attitudes:

1. The teacher guides the students in the learning process with empathy, positiveness, and fairness.

2. He motivates them to achieve to the maximum of their potential.

3. Professionally, he is cooperative with colleagues and supervisors and an exemplary person to emulate.

C. Professional Development:

1. Through institutes, seminars and other forms of study, the teacher continuously upgrades his professional and technical knowledge.

2. Relevant skills and technical knowledge are gained through selected summer employment for inclusion in his course of study.

3. The administration provides salary increments for added experiences.

4. School policy authorizes teachers to attend professional meetings.

D. Ability to Communicate with Students:

1. The teacher knows each student individually and manages the learning process and environment for the optimum benefit of the student.

2. Through his ability to verbalize, organize, and illustrate, the teacher maximizes the student achievement.

3. He maintains good rapport with students, colleagues, supervisors and administrators.

E. Parent Involvement:

1. Parents participate in formulating policies and procedures for the guidance of their children.

2. Parents participate in development of program goals.

3. Parents are represented on advisory councils.

ECONOMY

A. Business and Industry:

1. The school initiates and maintains liaison with business and industry.

2. Active liaison exists between the employers and the school.

3. Representatives from business and industry participate in program and curriculum development.

4. Active support by business and industry is provided the schools through work stations for cooperative students.

5. Business and industry looks to the school as a source of manpower.

6. Business and industry, including small private entrepreneurs, look to the school for retraining.

B. Organized Labor:

1. The school administration seeks the support of organized labor.

2. Representatives from the various unions participate in program development and serve on school committees including advisory committees.

C. Advisory Committees:

1. Use is made of a general advisory committee, craft committees and service committees in planning the occupational program.

2. Such committees are composed of lay persons, organized labor, educators, students, and the various occupational interests of the community.

3. Either general or special advisory committees provide attention to the needs of disadvantaged and handicapped.

D. Private and Public Agencies:

1. For services and program support, cooperative agreements have been developed between the school and such agencies as: the State Employment Service, public assistance, vocational rehabilitation, public health and social organizations.

2. Liaison and active support are sought from the local Chamber of Commerce and service organizations.

3. By contractual agreements, students are placed with private training institutions for instruction not offered in the school.

4. Students from private schools (parochial) are permitted to enroll in vocational courses.

STUDENTS

A. Involvement:

1. They participate with the administration, faculty, and advisory committees and others in planning the overall school program.

2. In addition to student council activities, students participate in the organization of classroom and shop learning experiences and the management of these experiences.

3. They are active in out-of-class activities on the same basis as other students.

B. Recruitment and Selection:

1. A system of recruitment exists through occupational orientation and visits to elementary and junior high schools by students and other designated persons.

2. Counseling and vocational orientation are an integral phase of this process.

3. The selection of an occupational curriculum is based on a match between all possible objective data on the student and his interests and occupational opportunities.

4. The recruitment and re-enrollment of dropouts is standard practice.

C. Attitudes Toward the Program:

1. Student attitudes, interest and ability are reflected in attendance, dress, rapport and achievement.

2. Disciplined behavior is exemplified in the classrooms, shops and laboratories, the hallways, playgrounds and school-sponsored functions.

3. Feedback information is positive toward occupational programs after employment.

D. Outcomes:

1. The student has developed interests, skills and personality characteristics which are required for becoming a productive member of society.

2. The program of vocational-technical education has few dropouts.

3. Employers look to the school for manpower to meet their needs.

4. Students from occupational programs are measured by job placement, retention, success on the job and continued education.

5. Regardless of the condition of the labor market, they are successful in securing employment.

E. Characteristics of Students:

1. Ethnically, the enrollment represents a cross-section of the school age population in the community with a wide range of interests, aptitudes and abilities. The disadvantaged and the handicapped are included to the greatest extent possible in the regular vocational programs.

2. Boys and girls are uniformly distributed among course offerings.

F. Youth Organizations:

1. Opportunities are provided for all students to participate in and develop leadership qualities in activities which supplement classroom, laboratory and shop learning experiences.

2. Youth leadership activities are established and supported as an integral part of the instructional program.